

# THE AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT FORUM

LIBREVILLE, GABON – AUGUST 24-27, 2015



**“AGOA has served as a catalyst for greater trade and prosperity.”**

**– Secretary of State John Kerry**

On August 24-27, 2015, the government of Gabon and the United States will co-host the 2015 African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum in Libreville, under the theme “AGOA at 15: Charting a Course for a Sustainable U.S.-Africa Trade and Investment Partnership.” Gabon will be the first central African country to host the AGOA Forum.

The 2015 Forum will provide a unique opportunity to celebrate the recent reauthorization of AGOA, take stock of AGOA’s successes over the last fifteen years and launch a dialogue on our shared vision for the future of U.S.-Africa trade.

## AGOA Ministerial Forum

AGOA legislation mandates that the United States and member countries regularly engage in trade and investment policy discussions at the annual AGOA Forum. This event brings together senior officials from the United States and the 39 AGOA member countries, business leaders, entrepreneurs — including youth and women — civil society actors, and private sector stakeholders to discuss a broad range of trade and investment-related issues.

## AGOA Side Events

The private sector and civil society organizations have a particularly important role in the promotion of good governance, the elimination of barriers to trade and investment, and the adherence to the founding AGOA eligibility criteria. The forum will feature civil society panel discussions August 24-25, along with “Doing Business in America” workshops and a trade exhibition, where participating entrepreneurs can network and display their products and services.

The African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) will conduct workshops on August 25-26 to focus on preparing African women entrepreneurs to integrate into regional and global procurement supply chains. These efforts comply with new AGOA legislation that specifically calls for the “promotion of the role of women in social and economic development.”

Key topics at the 2015 AGOA Forum will include:

- Building capacity to comply with eligibility requirements
- Promoting public/private partnerships

- Managing natural resources as a key to economic growth
- Bridging the digital divide

## The Role of AGOA

In both Africa and the United States, there is growing consensus that open trade and increased international investment are critical to spurring economic development and reducing poverty in Africa.

Enacted in May 2000, AGOA is the cornerstone of U.S. economic engagement in Africa, offering duty-free entry for nearly 98 per cent of all imports from eligible African countries, in combination with other trade preference programs. AGOA has succeeded in helping eligible nations grow, diversify their exports to the United States, and create employment and inclusive economic growth.

## AGOA Results

To date, eligible countries have exported nearly \$480 billion worth of goods to the United States under AGOA and the Generalized System of Preferences program. In 2014, non-oil AGOA trade was valued at \$4.4 billion, a 250 per cent increase from 2001, the first full year of AGOA.

## AGOA Benefits for American Business

- Stronger commercial ties between Africa and the United States
- Better market opportunities and stronger commercial partners in Africa for U.S. companies
- Harmonized intra-regional trade, expanding Africa’s potential as a U.S. trading partner
- Lowered African trade barriers, making the continent an easier place for U.S. companies to do business

AGOA encourages African economic and governance reform; spurs African engagement on trade capacity building; and fosters goodwill between the United States and Africa.

Learn more about the 2015 Forum at <http://www.state.gov/p/af/>